



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

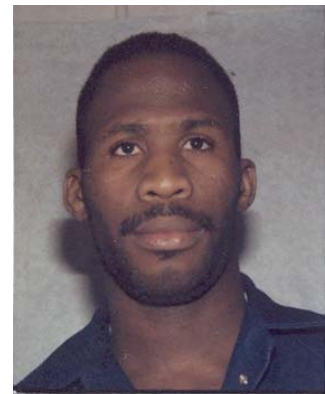
April 13, 2005

News Release

ICE DEPORTS CAREER CRIMINAL TO BAHAMAS

OMAHA, Neb.—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention and removal officers deported an illegal alien to the Bahamas today who had spent the better part of two decades in the U.S. amassing a significant criminal history extending from Florida to Iowa.

Dwayne Stevenson Sawyer, 39, a citizen of the Bahamas, had been formally deported twice before, and had also failed to leave the U.S. voluntarily after a federal immigration judge had ordered him to depart.



“This man seems determined to live a life of crime, but we’re even more determined to stop him,” said Resident Agent-in-Charge Estela Biesemeyer of the Des Moines ICE office. “We will not stand by as career criminals victimize our communities. Deporting this man brings us one step closer to restoring the integrity of our legal immigration system.”

Sawyer initially came to the U.S. on a six-month visitor’s visa in 1984, but remained illegally after it expired. Immigration authorities later arrested him and in June 1985 a federal immigration judge ordered him to depart the U.S. Sawyer defied the judge’s order and was arrested in Broward County, Fla., in 1987 for prowling and carrying a concealed weapon, though the charges were later dismissed.

In 1988, Sawyer was convicted of: vehicle theft in January, burglary in April, probation violation in July and grand theft in December. Sawyer was again convicted of burglary in 1989, forgery of a credit card in 1990 and forgery and grand theft in 1991. All convictions were for crimes committed in Broward County.

Sawyer's crime spree didn't stop there. He was convicted of burglary and petty theft in 1994, and in 1995 was finally turned over to immigration authorities, who deported him to the Bahamas. He illegally re-entered the U.S. and in 1998 was convicted of aggravated battery (using a firearm) in Florida and sentenced to one year and four months in prison. After serving his sentence, Sawyer was turned over to immigration authorities in 1999 and deported a second time.

ICE Des Moines special agents in April 2001 encountered Sawyer, who was using the alias Steven Thomas, in Polk County Jail. He was awaiting resolution of criminal charges for possessing a controlled substance with intent to deliver. Sawyer was later convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Agents placed a "detainer" on him, so that ICE would be notified upon his release from prison. ICE routinely conducts checks of jails and prisons nationwide to locate, identify and then deport criminal aliens.

ICE special agents took custody of Sawyer Oct. 23, 2001 and prepared to deport him. Sawyer filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus in U.S. District Court for the District of Nebraska to halt his deportation and gain release from custody, claiming that he was a U.S. citizen, having been born in Atlanta.

The court issued a stay of Sawyer's removal so he could present evidence to support his claim. Ultimately, U.S. District Judge Richard G. Kopf denied the petition March 18, 2005, paving the way for Sawyer's deportation today.

If Sawyer again attempts to illegally re-enter the United States, he could again be prosecuted. Re-entry after deportation is a felony offense punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

During fiscal year 2004, which ended Sept. 30, ICE detention and removal agents removed 3,152 criminal aliens and status violators from a five-state area that includes: Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. Of that number, 1,488 were classified as criminal aliens for having been convicted of such crimes as: drug offenses, assault and battery, armed robbery, rape, and fraud, among others. The remaining 1,664 had committed administrative immigration law violations.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.